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**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD  
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

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Landmark/District:	<b>Capitol Hill Historic District</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	<b>19 Rear 4<sup>th</sup> Street NE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
ANC:	<b>6C</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
		<input type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Meeting Date:	<b>December 19, 2019</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Case Number:	<b>20-096</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

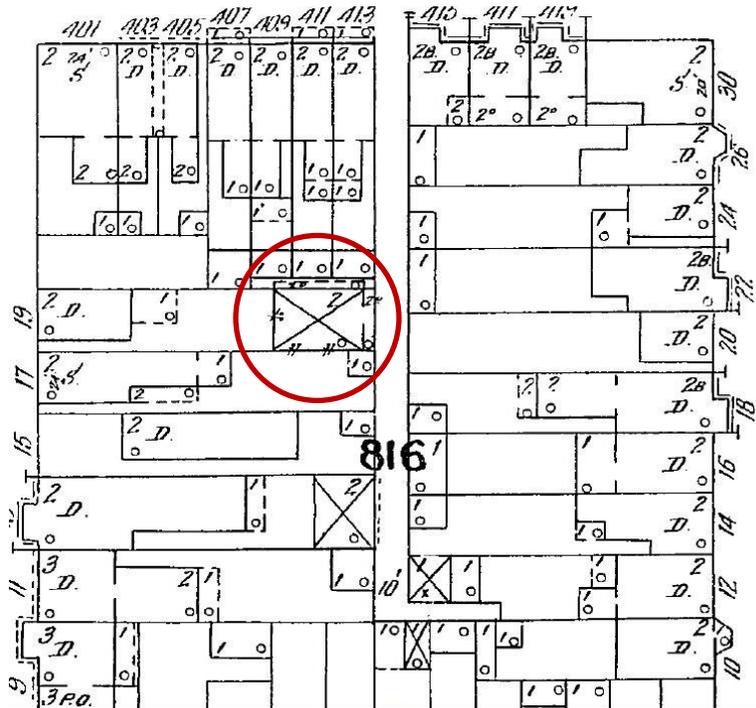
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Applicant Hillsdale College seeks concept review for demolition of a two-story brick carriage house and construction of a new two-story building in the Capitol Hill Historic District. Architectural plans have been developed by Michael G. Imber Architects and a structural assessment has been prepared by Christopher Cobb, P.E. of MCE 1200 Architectural Engineers.

**Property Description**

The existing two-story building was constructed as a stable between 1888 and 1916, replacing a smaller one-story structure. Sometime before 1928 it was converted to use as an automotive garage. The building has always occupied its own independent lot, separate from the street-fronting lot behind which it is located.



*Detail from 1904-1916 Sanborn insurance*

The building has been altered over time. Most significantly, the majority of the brick wall on the west (alley) elevation has been removed and infilled with a single retractable garage door on the first story and clad with wood boards on the second story. The north elevation, which used to have either a roof or lean-to addition, has a pedestrian door and three windows on the first story and another three windows on the second story. At the west (rear) elevation, the wall is mostly blank and has one window on the second story. The south elevation has been parged on the first story but shows signs of horse stall windows that have been infilled. The second story has two windows. At the interior and exterior of the building there are signs of various windows being altered or infilled on the north and south elevations. It appears the building's windows would have originally had segmental arches of two header rows.



*Photographs of the north, east, and south elevations of the existing two-story carriage house*

## **Proposal**

After evaluation of the building's structural condition, the applicants have developed the proposal to include demolition and construction within the same envelope. The new building would measure about 19'-10" wide and 29'-6" deep and 23'-4" tall. The east (alley) elevation would have a pedestrian door with glazing and a larger fixed double outswing door with glazing on the first floor and three six-over-six double hung windows on the second story. The faux carriage doors would be fixed in place and spanned at the top by a steel lintel. The windows would have segmental arches of two header rows, and a brick cornice would cap the alley elevation. The north elevation would have three small windows on the first story and three windows, two larger and one smaller, on the second story. The larger windows would have segmental arches of two header rows and the smaller windows would not. The west elevation would have one small window on the second story and otherwise be a blank elevation. The south elevation would have a pedestrian door with glazing and a small window on the first floor and two larger windows on the second story. As with the existing building, larger windows would have segmental arches of two header rows and the smaller windows would not.

## **Evaluation**

Based on its date of construction and architectural character, the existing building is contributing to the Capitol Hill Historic District. The district is distinctive for its alleys and alley buildings; of the 325 stable buildings identified in the 2014 DC Historic Alley Buildings Survey, 82 of those were in Capitol Hill.

However, in HPO's touring the building with the applicant's structural engineer, its deterioration and precarious condition are clearly evident. The west wall is almost entirely missing, and the north and south walls are visibly racking and out of plumb. Sections of the top of the south and west walls appear to have been repointed or rebuilt, and the shallow foundations can be seen exposed on the interior. While it might conceivably be possible to retain some portions of exterior walls, this would likely still require substantial reconstruction of at least two of the three remaining walls.

The design for the proposed new building draws from the existing building in size, material, and design- even replicating the variety of window sizes that were the result of cumulative alterations over time. While the height of the proposed building exceeds the standard 20-foot height limit typically applied by the Board, it is a reasonable variation given that it recreates the existing condition. Though replicating the scale and style of a historic stable, the reconstructed building would be intended solely for residential use.

## **Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends the Board find the project to demolish the existing building and construct a new two story building in the same envelope to be compatible with the Capitol Hill historic district, and delegate final approval to staff.*

*Staff contact: Moira Nadal*